

U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop expressed support for a "fair, fiscally responsible and fast-acting" tax relief plan to lift the economy while voting against a majority-backed plan that was passed in the House Friday, which he described as "unfair, fiscally irresponsible and slow-acting at best."

The majority plan passed by a vote of 222-203, while the alternative proposal backed by the Second District Congressman was barred from floor consideration under the debate rules adopted by the House Rules Committee. A joint conference committee was expected to eventually try to resolve the differences between separate House and Senate versions of the tax cut legislation. The Congressman said he hoped a bill that would better stimulate the economy, help the unemployed, and hold down the deficit would emerge as it moved through the Senate and conference negotiations.

The debate is over rival proposals to stimulate the struggling economy and create jobs at a time of high unemployment, mainly by reducing taxes.

Representative Bishop said the House-passed majority bill "gambles with our economic future, offers giveaways to the wealthy, and provides only gimmicks for working Americans."

He said the alternative plan supported by a number of fiscal moderates and conservatives in the House would provide more relief for working families and less for the country's wealthiest citizens; hold down the budget deficits more; stimulate the economy much faster; provide targeted relief for small businesses; provide help to financially-strapped states, and extended help to the unemployed.

Representative Bishop made this comparison between the two plans:

The alternative plan puts a bigger share of the benefits in the pockets of average Americans, including an immediate increase in the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief and an expansion of the 10 percent tax bracket, while the majority plan would put a bigger share in the hands of more affluent taxpayers, giving 53 percent of average income Americans a tax cut of less than \$100.

The alternative plan would leave the country with smaller budget deficits and less debt, which is crucial to holding down interest rates.

The alternative plan features tax cuts that could quickly stimulate the economy, promising to create more than one million jobs this year while the majority plan promises to create only a fraction of that number.

The alternative plan extends unemployment benefits to five million out of work Americans, which economists say is one of the most effective ways to stimulate the economy, while the majority plan provides no unemployment benefit extension.

The alternative plan provides \$44 billion in aid to financially-strapped states for homeland security, highways, education and health care, while the majority plan offers no state aid.

The alternative plan provides \$29 billion in tax cuts to small businesses, and while the majority plan also includes small business relief, the higher deficits would negatively affect investment in small business and their access to capital.

The alternative plan includes tax credits to businesses that employ the unemployed of up to \$2,400, while the majority plan offers no such incentive.